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1 COMBINATION ROPE AND CLIP FOR CULLING FISH

2  
3 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

4 This invention relates to an apparatus for use in the sport of fishing.

5  
6 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

7 In a bass fishing tournament, the limit of a single fisherman is often five fish, the  
8 limit for a team is often seven fish, and salt-water limits can be ten fish. It is important  
9 for a fisherman, when fishing in a tournament, to have a quick and easy way to cull fish.  
10 When the maximum number of fish is caught and put in the live well, and the fisherman  
11 has caught another fish, it is time to start culling. Culling is an ongoing process of  
12 releasing the smallest fish and replacing it with a larger fish. Many different methods  
13 have been developed over the years for identifying which fish is the smallest. Often a  
14 hook or a clip with some type marker is attached to the fish. The hook or clip can be  
15 attached to the fish through the fish's mouth or to one of the fish's fins. Some of these  
16 hooks or clips can injure the fish by puncturing holes in fish. Some of these hooks and  
17 lips have a length of cord attached that can become entangled with other hooks, clips or  
18 cords. These cords often sink to the bottom of the live well unless tied to the wall of the  
19 live well.

20  
21 BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

22 The present invention is intended to overcome these disadvantages. Accordingly,

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2 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

3 Figure 1 shows a one piece molded clip 100 according to the prior art. The clip is  
4 molded of an acetal resin, preferably DuPont DELRIN. The clip has a first rigid member  
5 102 spaced from a second rigid member 104. A spacer 114 joins the rigid members.  
6 Member 102 has an upper portion 106 that extends upward from the spacer 114 and a  
7 lower portion 110 that extends downward from the spacer 114. Likewise, member 104  
8 has an upper portion 108 that extends upward from the spacer 114 and a lower portion  
9 112 that extends downward from the spacer 114. The upper portions 106 and 108 are  
10 shown having a plurality of grooves to assist in gripping the clip. At the distal end of  
11 each of the lower portions 110 and 112 furthest from the spacer 114 is a protrusion 136  
12 and 138. The protrusions 136 and 138 extend towards each other and are angled upward  
13 towards the spacer 114. At the end of the protrusions 136 and 138 are gripping portions  
14 126 and 128 respectively. The gripping portions 126 and 128 are shown having a  
15 plurality of grooves to assist in the gripping of items. The spacer 114 joins the rigid  
16 member 102 and 104, spaces them, and operates as a fulcrum. The clip is designed such  
17 that in the absence of any forces applied to the upper portions 106 and 108, the gripping  
18 portions 126 and 128 are in close proximity. A force F applied to the upper portions 106  
19 and 108 of rigid members 102 and 104 urges the gripping portions 126 and 128 to  
20 separate. A biasing member 116 opposes the force F. An item 134 inserted between the  
21 gripping portions 126 and 128 when they are spaced will be secured when the force is  
22 removed. The biasing member 116 extending from the upper portion 108 of rigid





1 opening 124', and then releases the upper portions 106' and 108'. The fisherman can  
2 then put the fish 300 and the assembly 200 into the live well. The fish is free to swim  
3 around the live well. The end 206 of the rope 204 floats on the top of the water. When  
4 the fisherman wants to remove a fish from the live well, all he has to do is grab the end of  
5 the rope floating on top of the water in the live well.

6 The combination clip and rope can be sold in kits of five or more. Preferably,  
7 each of the ropes is a different color. The different colors allow the fisherman to quickly  
8 and easily find the smallest fish by grabbing the appropriate colored rope. The fisherman  
9 may use a list to keep track of the weight and the corresponding color of rope.  
10 Alternatively, the first end 204 can include an indicator upon which the fish weight can  
11 be written.

12 ~~Figure 5 shows a second embodiment of a clip 100". The clip 100" shows an~~  
13 ~~alternative biasing member 116" and lip stop 130". The biasing member 116" is coupled~~  
14 ~~to the ends of upper portions 106" and 108". Coupled to the biasing member 116" is a~~  
15 ~~pair of protrusions 150A" and 150B". The protrusions 150A" and 150B" form an~~  
16 ~~opening 150". The opening 150" provides a convenient coupling location for a rope.~~  
17 ~~When a force is exerted upward on the coupled rope, the force urges the upper portion~~  
18 ~~106" and 108" away from each other which urges protrusions 136" and 138" closer~~  
19 ~~together. This increases the gripping force of the protrusion 136" and 138". The~~  
20 ~~alternative lip stop 130" is shown as a "T".~~

21 It should be understood that, while the present invention has been described in  
22 detail herein, the invention can be embodied otherwise without departing from the

1 principles thereof, and such other embodiments are meant to come within the scope of  
2 the present invention as defined in the following claim(s)